



MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Renee Hall, City Clerk
Date: June 5, 2026
Subject: Packet of Communications to Council

Listed below are the communications to the City Council known to staff as of June 5, 2026:

1. Joel Buehler, Ames Resident – June 1, 2026
RE: Proposed Stange Road Improvement Plan
2. Victoria Blumen, Ames Resident – June 1, 2026
RE: Grand path and 5th
3. Kate Gregory, Ames Resident/OTNA Board – June 3, 2026
RE: 608 Burnett Avenue Project
4. Kelly Diekmann, Planning & Housing Director – June 5, 2026
RE: 300 Airport Road request to change land use designation

Hall, Renee

From: Joel Buehler <joelbuehler@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 1:24 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: Somerset's Stange Road dropping to 2 lanes for bike path, parking area

[External Email]

Dear Mayor and Members of the Ames City Council,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed Stange Road improvement plan and to ask an important question: when and how were residents of North Ames meaningfully consulted on this proposal?

While I support efforts to improve pedestrian safety and create safer public spaces, I believe this proposal creates significant concerns for Stange Road as one of Ames' primary north-south traffic corridors.

Reducing or rerouting through traffic on a major arterial roadway like Stange Road risks creating congestion, particularly during peak commuting periods and times of increased Iowa State University traffic. This corridor serves a critical transportation function for North Ames residents, commuters, emergency services, and visitors. Narrowing vehicle flow or introducing additional conflict points could lead to backups at intersections, increased travel times, and greater driver frustration.

The current design appears to prioritize recreational and pedestrian use over efficient traffic movement on a roadway originally intended to accommodate high traffic volumes. Features such as expanded green space, angled parking, and shared-use paths may be more appropriate for lower-volume streets or downtown areas, but on a major arterial roadway they may reduce capacity and create unnecessary bottlenecks.

I am also concerned about safety and predictability. Increasing the number of pedestrian and bicycle crossings along a heavily traveled corridor creates more interaction points between vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. While most users act responsibly, inconsistent compliance with traffic controls can create unpredictable situations and increase the risk of accidents.

In addition, how does the City plan to ensure cyclists follow the rules of the road and traffic controls? Throughout town, I have frequently observed cyclists crossing intersections unpredictably or failing to follow traffic signals and signage. This creates safety concerns not only for drivers, but also for pedestrians and cyclists themselves.

I also question whether the scale and cost of this redesign are truly necessary. I have never observed a significant parking issue in the Somerset area given the large number of existing parking lots already available nearby. It seems reasonable to ask whether the stated goals could have been accomplished through far less disruptive measures.

For example, could pedestrian safety concerns have been addressed with enhanced crosswalk visibility, pedestrian-activated flashing signals, or other targeted improvements that clearly identify crossing areas without significantly reducing roadway capacity or altering traffic flow on a major arterial street?

Additionally, I ask the Council to carefully consider the impacts on emergency response times, snow removal operations, and long-term traffic management. Narrower lanes, modified medians, and additional infrastructure may complicate winter maintenance and reduce emergency vehicle accessibility during high-traffic periods.

Another major concern is traffic diversion. If traffic flow on Stange Road becomes less efficient, vehicles will likely shift onto nearby residential streets that were never designed to handle higher traffic volumes. This could negatively impact neighborhood safety and quality of life for residents throughout North Ames.

Most importantly, I would like to know how residents of North Ames were engaged during the planning process. Many residents I have spoken with were either unaware of the proposal or do not feel their concerns were adequately considered before moving forward with a concept that could significantly impact daily transportation throughout the area.

I respectfully ask the City Council to ensure there is meaningful public engagement with North Ames residents before advancing this proposal further. Improvements to walkability and pedestrian safety are important goals, but they should be balanced with maintaining efficient traffic flow, accessibility, and the long-term transportation needs of the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joel A Buehler
North Ames Resident

Hall, Renee

From: Victoria Blumen <veblumen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 8:41 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: Grand path at 5th

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from veblumen@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

[External Email]

Hi!

I'm aware of some construction at this intersection, and I'm concerned about changes that will make biking near there more uncomfortable. Can these plans please be submitted for public feedback?

Thank you,
Victoria Blumen

Sent from my iPhone

Hall, Renee

From: Katherine Gregory <klgregory4@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 7:14 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: Project at 608 Burnett Ave

[External Email]

Dear Mayor Haila and City Council Members,

We are writing to express our views on the proposed apartment building project at 608 Burnett Ave. We appreciate the time and effort invested by Luke Jensen in meeting with us (the Old Town Neighborhood Association (OTNA) Board) to explain the project and solicit our feedback. Our feedback is generally related to the precedent that will be set by this project for future projects in the adjacent area between Downtown and Old Town. The feedback below represents the views by several members of the OTNA Board only, not the entire Old Town Neighborhood.

With the above caveat, The project is a good step by the City and developer in executing the City's vision for this area and in creating much-needed infill housing in downtown Ames [previous item 5] The project is appreciated as it might help stabilize the residential nature of Old Town Neighborhood and lead to similar projects along the NC corridor. The additional residents in the area will likely stimulate downtown businesses and encourage future growth in the area, adding the City's tax base.

We hope the thoughts listed below will be considered during the next phases of planning and approval:

1. Because this project is expected to be planned and built before the City can define exactly what type of zoning amendment(s) and/or changes would be best for NC zoning or determine whether a new type of Zoning District should apply to his area, the project will set a precedent for similar projects in this area in the future. There is concern that decisions related to size, parking, traffic, appearance/facade, tax abatement, etc. may be made in haste, without sufficient consideration and public input, that are not beneficial in the long term to the local neighborhood and larger community.
2. The tax abatement requested by the developer is significant and, as noted at the City Council meeting, significantly larger than previously approved by the City. Given the City's anticipated financial challenges, there is concern that this and future tax abatement of similar size will undermine the City's fiscal position.

3. The project is expected to have ~38 units and one parking spot per unit. It might be anticipated that residents will own more than 38 vehicles given at least double occupancy of some units. The resultant impact on on-street parking and traffic on Burnett Ave and the alley east of Burnett Ave will be significant. This area has very high pedestrian, skateboard, and bike traffic already and there is a concern about the resultant safety impacts of the project.

4. The site (608 Burnett Ave) is between the City's two historic districts -- Old Town and Main Street. Residents and business owners in both Districts have worked hard and made significant investments to maintain the historic appearance of the areas. There is a concern that the exterior design standards for the proposed project and future projects in the area currently zoned NC will not integrate with the adjacent districts and detract from the historic atmosphere that has been cultivated for decades.

Please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.

Best,
The OTNA Board



Memo

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Kelly Diekmann, Planning & Housing Director

DATE: June 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Request to change to an Employment Land Use Designation from Commercial for 300 Airport Road.

City Council received a letter dated May 4th from Ron McMillen asking Council initiate a land use amendment process for a 14-acre property that was previously developed with an industrial building, but is currently designated as commercial and zoned for commercial use. The owner believes the site is best suited for reuse of the existing building by another industrial user since the prior tenant (Danfoss) relocated to another facility. The site is located between Lowes and the Airport. See Land Use Map excerpt below.

The site has been designated commercial and zoned Highway Oriented Commercial (HOC) for over 25 years. The prior use of the site by Danfoss was considered legal nonconforming for a warehouse facility. Continued use of the site as a warehouse is permitted as a nonconforming use.

Staff Comments

The site has traditionally been used for industrial purposes and is situated in a location that has limited retail commercial visibility. **Considering a change to the land use and eventual rezoning has merit.** If changed to Employment, the site could be either Planned Industrial or General Industrial. Either zoning district would likely meet the goals of the owner for reuse of the building, but GI has more permissive development standards and a broader ranges of use options than PI. Details on potential industrial uses could be addressed in more detail with a future rezoning, including potentially a Master Plan to control for specific site improvements or uses.

In a somewhat related matter, a potential small “edge” or “regional” data center user has inquired about locating at this site. A change to an industrial zone would be needed to accommodate such a use staff has determined a data center is not permitted in HOC zoning.

